



# UPDATE

September/October 2012

*A bi-monthly newsletter for Veterans served by the St. Cloud VA Health Care System, and for those who serve Veterans. Send news items and comments to St. Cloud VA Health Care System, Attn: Public Affairs Officer, 4801 Veterans Drive, St. Cloud, MN 56303, or via email to [Barry.Venable@va.gov](mailto:Barry.Venable@va.gov)*



**STAND BY THEM.**

**Help A Veteran in Crisis...pg. 6**

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**VA**  
HEALTH  
CARE

Defining  
**EXCELLENCE**  
in the 21st Century

## Calendar of Events

Monday Sept. 3—**Labor Day Holiday.** Outpatient Clinics and Services closed for the federal holiday. Urgent Care Clinic in St. Cloud open 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Tuesday, Sept. 4—**St. Cloud Area Veterans' Law Clinic** - 12 noon to 2:00p.m. Free legal consultation for Veterans for: Social Security Law, Housing, Consumer, Child Support, Family Law, and Employment. No criminal law issues will be discussed. Please call 320.253.0138 or 1-800-622-7773 to schedule an appointment.

Wednesday, Sept. 12—**U.S. Military Service Academy Information Night.** Organized by the Office of Congresswoman Michele Bachmann. 7 to 8:30 p.m., St. Cloud Public Library (Bremer Room)

Wednesday Sept. 12—**Suicide Prevention Awareness Month Presentation: "Suicide Punchline."** 9 to 10 a.m., Bldg. 8 (Auditorium) Join solo performer Jennifer Tudor as she cross-examines her ghosts, knocks 'em dead at cocktail parties, and enters dioramas of the afterlife. In *Suicide Punchline* surviving is the opposite of solving.

Tuesday, Sept. 18—**St. Cloud Area Veterans' Law Clinic** - 12 noon to 2 p.m. Free legal consultation for Veterans for: Social Security Law, Housing, Consumer, Child Support, Family Law, and Employment. No criminal law issues will be discussed. Please call 320-253-0138 or 1-800-622-7773 to schedule an appointment.

Tuesday, Sept. 18—**Suicide Prevention Awareness Month Movie "The Bridge."** 1 to 3 p.m., Bldg. 8 (Auditorium)

Thursday, Sept. 20—**Suicide Prevention Awareness Month Movie "Daughter of Suicide"**—1 to 3 p.m., Bldg. 8, (Auditorium)

Friday, Sept. 21—**Southwestern Minnesota Veterans' Law Clinic**, 12 noon to 2 p.m., at the Montevideo CBOC. FREE legal consultation for Veterans for Social Security Law, Housing, Consumer Law, Child Support, Family Law, and Employment. No criminal issues will be discussed. Please call 320-430-1051 to schedule an appointment.

### FACTS

Gray whales migrate 12,000 miles each year, farther than any other mammal.  
Walt Disney World is home to the largest working wardrobe in the world with over 2.5 million costumes

## Calendar of Events, cont.

Tuesday, Sept. 25—**Healthy Mind-Body-Spirit**, a Women Veterans Health & Wellness Event—5:30 to 8 p.m., Bldg. 96. The 5th Annual Women Veterans Health and Wellness event is titled "Healthy Mind-Body-Spirit" and features a variety of activities for women to try enroute to a healthy lifestyle. Sample "Drumming & the Power of Rhythm," or check out Zumba, or feel the mind calming movements of Tai Chi. Registration is \$5 per individual or \$8 for two registrations, and is due by Sep 13. Get registration forms from and mail them to Dean Flanders, Administrative Support Assistant, 4801 Veterans Drive, St. Cloud, MN 56303. For more information, call 320-255-6371.

Tuesday, Sept. 25—**16th Annual St. Cloud Area Job Fair**. River's Edge Convention Center, St. Cloud, 12:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Thursday, Sept. 27—**Suicide Prevention Month Event "Stories of Recovery"** - 1 to 2 p.m., Bldg. 8, Auditorium

Tuesday, Oct. 2—**St. Cloud Area Veterans' Law Clinic** - 12 noon to 2:00p.m. Free legal consultation for Veterans for: Social Security Law, Housing, Consumer, Child Support, Family Law, and Employment. No criminal law issues will be discussed. Please call 320.253.0138 or 1-800-622-7773 to schedule an appointment.

Tuesday, Oct. 16—**St. Cloud Area Veterans' Law Clinic** - 12 noon to 2:00p.m. Free legal consultation for Veterans for: Social Security Law, Housing, Consumer, Child Support, Family Law, and Employment. No criminal law issues will be discussed. Please call 320-253-0138 or 1-800-622-7773 to schedule an appointment.

Friday, Oct. 19—**Southwestern Minnesota Veterans' Law Clinic**, 12 noon to 2 p.m., at the Montevideo CBOC. FREE legal consultation for Veterans for Social Security Law, Housing, Consumer Law, Child Support, Family Law, and Employment. No criminal issues will be discussed. Please call 320-430-1051 to

**Veterans**

**Eligible for VA Health Care?**

**Find Out. Apply.**

**320.255.6340 • [www.1010ez.med.va.gov](http://www.1010ez.med.va.gov)**

**You Served.**  
**Now Let Us Serve You.**

**St. Cloud VA**  
Health Care System  
Brainerd | Montevideo | Alexandria



## Calendar of Events, cont.

Friday, Oct. 19—**Southwestern Minnesota Veterans' Law Clinic**, 12 noon to 2 p.m., at the Montevideo CBOC. FREE legal consultation for Veterans for Social Security Law, Housing, Consumer Law, Child Support, Family Law, and Employment. No criminal issues will be discussed. Please call 320-430-1051 to schedule an appointment.

Thursday, October. 25— **Mind-Body Wellness for Management of Chronic Pain**, 9 to 11:30 am., St. Cloud VFW, 9 18th Ave, St. Cloud. This program is designed for Veterans and their families who want to learn more about mind-body wellness techniques that will assist with self-management of chronic pain. The seminar is free, but pre-registration is required. For registration information contact the Mental Health Clinic at 320-255-6322, and ask about registering for the seminar. Registration deadline is Oct. 11, 2012. Note: This same seminar is also available in the evening from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., in the St. Cloud VA Auditorium (Bldg. 8).

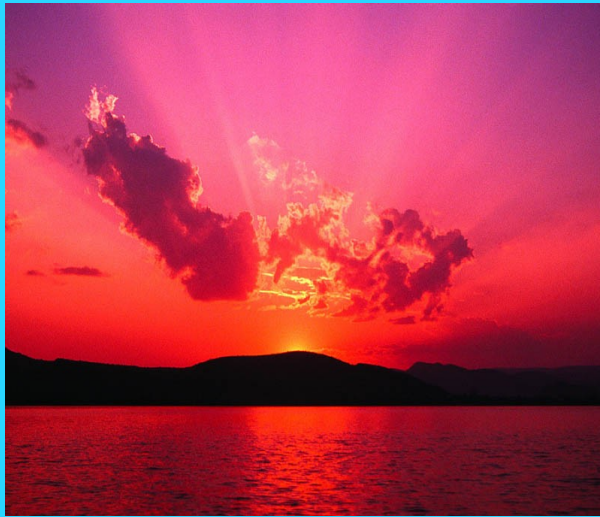
Friday, October 26—**St. Cloud Stand Down**, St. Cloud National Guard Armory, 1710 Veterans Drive, St. Cloud. NEED HELP? The Stand Down offers on the spot help to all Veterans regardless of discharge status. For more information, call 211-United Way of 800-543-7709.

Saturday, November 17— **"Accidental Hero"** - 2 p.m., Bldg. 8 (Auditorium). Written and performed by the grandson of a WWII hero, this performance tells the extraordinary true story of a modest farm boy from the Midwest who ended up liberating the very towns in Czechoslovakia where his grandparents once lived. Told with rare color WWII film footage, music, and photos from the 1940s. The VA performance is for residential and inpatient Veterans only, but everyone can catch the show at the College of St. Benedicts. For more on the show: <http://www.csbsju.edu/Fine-Arts/Performing-Arts/Accidental-Hero-1213.htm>

### **Favorite Quotation:**

"The Constitution only gives people the right to pursue happiness. You have to catch it yourself."  
- Ben Franklin





# Mind-Body Chronic Pain Management

**Register Now!**

## **Mind-Body Chronic Pain Management: An Educational Seminar for Veterans and their Families**

St. Cloud VFW Post 428

Thursday Oct 25, 2012

9-11:30 a.m.

OR

St. Cloud VA Medical Center

Auditorium (Building #8)

Thursday Oct 25, 2012

6:00-8:30 p.m.

This program is designed for Veterans and their families who want to learn more about mind-body wellness techniques that will assist with self management of chronic pain. This is an interactive seminar that will involve audience participation.

This program is free. There is no co-pay. Travel pay is **not** authorized for those who attend.

### Registration Form

Mind-Body Chronic Pain Management:  
An Educational Seminar

Oct. 25, 2012

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Attending \_\_\_\_\_

Check which seminar attending:

VFW morning seminar \_\_\_\_\_

or

VA evening seminar \_\_\_\_\_

Send your registration to the following  
address by Oct 11th:

St. Cloud VA Medical Center

Education (ED) #48-6

4801 Veterans Drive

St. Cloud, MN 56303-2099

Questions call Mental Health Clinic:

(320) 255-6322 from 7:30AM-4:30PM

**Monday through Friday**

September is ...

# Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

Did you know that, in the United States, more people die by suicide (50% more!) each year than by homicide? Experts believe that most suicidal individuals do not want to die. They just want to end the pain they are experiencing.

When suicidal intent or risk is detected early, lives can be saved.

Keep Veterans healthy by joining us during Suicide Prevention Awareness Month this September. The theme of the month is “Stand By Them: Help a Veteran.” Together we can reduce the number of lives shaken by a needless and tragic death.

A wide variety of activities to increase suicide awareness are planned. Please see the flyer on the opposite page for details, and make plans to get involved and help a Veteran, including yourself.



To learn more about Suicide Prevention Month and sign an online pledge, visit [VeteransCrisisLine.net](http://VeteransCrisisLine.net)



## Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

September 2012

**"STAND BY THEM: HELP A VETERAN"**

### **FOR ALL:**

#### "Suicide Punchline"

performance by Jennifer Tudor, PhD

September 12<sup>th</sup> 9am-10am: Auditorium (Bldg 8)

Join solo performer Jen Tudor as she cross-examines her ghosts, knocks 'em dead at cocktail parties, and enters dioramas of the afterlife. In *Suicide Punchline* surviving is the opposite of solving.

*The Bridge* - Viewing of the movie

September 18<sup>th</sup>

1pm-3pm: Auditorium (Bldg 8)

*Daughter of Suicide* - Viewing of the movie

September 20<sup>th</sup>

1pm-2:30pm: Auditorium (Bldg 8)

Visit Table in the Canteen all month to get information on Warning Signs and Risk Factors, Depression, Grief and Loss, Community Resources and much more!

### **FOR VETERANS:**

#### Comfort Quilt Give Away

2 quilts made by Veterans For Veterans will be given away at the end of September.

Submit your name at the canteen suicide prevention table, the mental health information table or Bldg 1 primary care information desk.

Veterans Crisis Resource Information Group

September 5<sup>th</sup> and September 25<sup>th</sup>

9am-10am: Auditorium (Bldg 8)

Stories of Recovery

September 27<sup>th</sup>

1pm-2:00pm: Auditorium (Bldg 8)

### **FOR CLINICAL STAFF:**

#### Introduction to Firearms for Improved Cultural Competence and Risk Assessment

September 11<sup>th</sup> and October 1<sup>st</sup>

11am-12pm: Bldg 28 Rm 123 (1.0 CEU available)

Join Sarah Heuser, LICSW to discuss how understanding firearms can help improve your therapeutic interactions.

## **How To Recognize When To Ask For Help**

Sometimes problems seem like they are impossible to solve for many different reasons. Sometimes we are not even fully aware a problem is building up. We just know something is wrong.

When problems build up, even the strongest individuals may think about suicide. Yet suicide is not the answer. Are you, or someone you know, at risk for suicide? Seek help if you notice any of the following warning signs:

- Threatening to hurt or kill self
- Looking for ways to kill self
- Trying to get pills, guns, or other means to harm oneself
- Talking or writing about death, dying or suicide
- Feeling hopeless
- Experiencing rage, uncontrolled anger or seeking revenge
- Acting reckless or engaging in risky activities
- Feeling trapped, like there's no way out
- Abusing drugs or alcohol
- Withdrawing from friends or family
- Having dramatic changes in mood
- Feeling like there is no reason for living, no sense of purpose in life
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Giving away possessions

If you are experiencing any of these warning signs, the first thing to do is ask for help. Asking for help can be as easy as picking up the phone and calling the Veterans Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273 TALK (8255) and pressing Option 1. The hotline is staffed around the clock, 365 days a year by trained professionals who know how to get you the help you need.



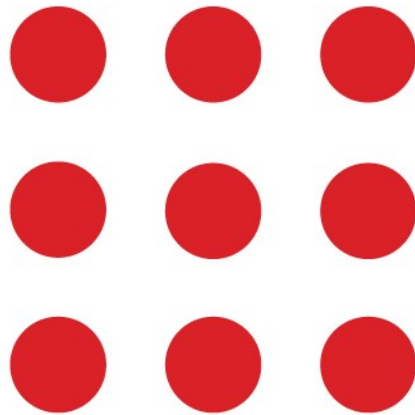


## Myths and Realities

- Myth: Asking about suicide will plant the idea in a person's head.
- Reality: Asking about suicide does not create suicidal thoughts. The act of asking the question simply gives the veteran permission to talk about his or her thoughts or feelings.
- Myth: There are talkers and there are doers.
- Reality: Most people who die by suicide have communicated some intent. Someone who talks about suicide gives the guide and/or clinician an opportunity to intervene before suicidal behaviors occur.
- Myth: If somebody really wants to die by suicide, there is nothing you can do about it.
- Reality: Most suicidal ideas are associated with treatable disorders. Helping someone find a safe environment for treatment can save a life. The acute risk for suicide is often time-limited. If you can help the person survive the immediate crisis and overcome the strong intent to die by suicide, you have gone a long way toward promoting a positive outcome.
- Myth: He/she really wouldn't commit suicide because...
- Reality: The intent to die can override any rational thinking. Someone experiencing suicidal ideation or intent must be taken seriously and referred to a clinical provider who can further evaluate their condition and provide treatment as appropriate.
- Myth: I'm a Veteran, there is not one for me to ask for help.
- Reality: If you are a Veteran or know a Veteran who is experiencing any of these signs, call the Veterans Crisis Line at **1-800-273-8255** and **Press 1** or chat online at [www.VeteransCrisisLine.net](http://www.VeteransCrisisLine.net) today.



# Veterans Crisis Line



**1-800-273-8255**

**PRESS 1**

**One Number....One Mission  
To get you help when you need it most.**



# SEPTEMBER'S SPECIAL

## 6" Italian Grinder

419 calories

**4<sup>89</sup>**  
12" \$5.99

*Ham, salami, pepperoni, mushrooms, fresh onions and crisp green peppers on a crusty sub roll, topped with a zesty marinara sauce and melted provolone cheese*



[www.facebook.com/StCloudVAHCS](http://www.facebook.com/StCloudVAHCS)



**Connect with us on Facebook!**

## Cataract Surgery Now Available at St. Cloud

Over half of all Americans will develop cataracts by the age of 70 – but poor vision does not have to be a part of aging. A simple outpatient procedure—cataract surgery—is now available at the St. Cloud VA HCS to restore vision and get you back to driving, reading and seeing clearly.

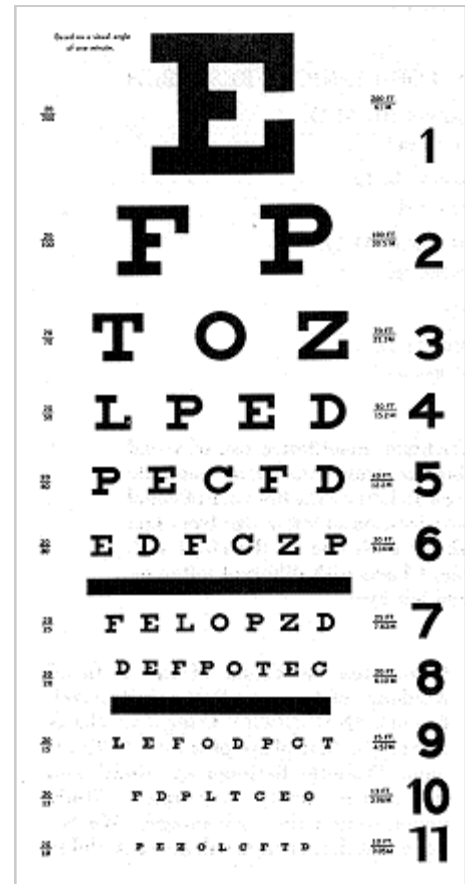
"We now have an ophthalmologist on staff who comes in twice per month to perform cataract surgery," said Dr. Jay Collins, Chief of Surgery at the St. Cloud VA. "The surgeon currently treats six patients each time he comes to the VA and we are looking at expanding the number of patients we can treat each month."

"Cataract surgery is such an amazing procedure! Not only does the surgery get rid of the cataracts, but in most cases the surgeon is also able to correct vision using implants," Collins added.

"This is a wonderful improvement in service for Veterans, he added. Large number of Veterans suffer from cataracts simply due to the aging process, and now we can correct the condition for them in our Ambulatory Surgery Center."

Modern cataract surgery is one of the safest and most effective surgical procedures performed in the United States, and yet many affected individuals avoid treatment. In fact, cataract surgery is usually performed in an ambulatory surgery center, takes less than fifteen minutes to perform and patients can resume most normal activities the next day.

"Cataract surgery is done under topical anesthesia," Collins said, "and this makes it available to people who have to otherwise avoid surgical procedures. Even patients on blood thinning medications like warfarin can have cataract surgery." *(continued next page)*





(Cont.)

The marriage between the operating room and the technology and the skill of the surgeon make this service possible for Central Minnesota Veterans, Collins said. A little over a year ago the St. Cloud VA's Ambulatory Surgery Center had not opened.

"The simple fact that we now have a Surgery Center enables us to provide more services—like cataract surgery—to Veterans, Collins stated. "The money we used to pay out to private sector providers to address cataracts can now be channeled into more direct care... for more Veterans."

Since cataracts develop over years, gradual changes in vision can become the "new normal" and therefore ignored longer than necessary. Some people even describe cataracts as looking through a "dirty windshield." Visit with your VA primary care provider or optometrist to see if a referral to the ophthalmologist is appropriate if you are experiencing any of the following symptoms:

- Blurred, cloudy vision
- Difficulty seeing at night or while driving
- Sensitivity to light
- Seeing a "halo" around bright lights
- Colors appear faded or yellowed

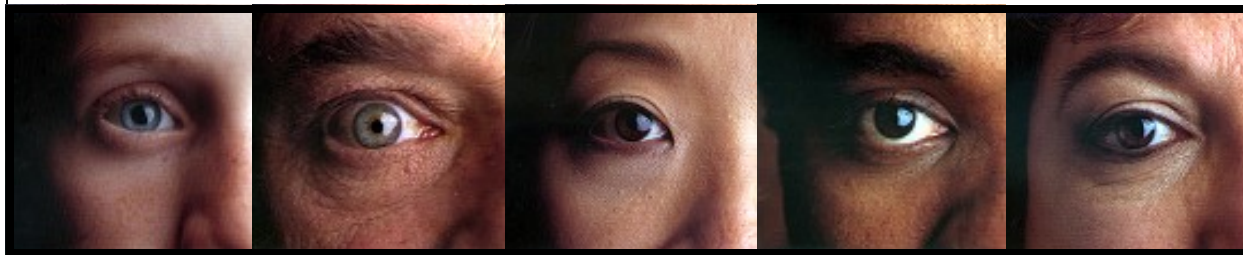
A comprehensive eye exam will determine whether cataracts are present and whether you are a candidate for surgery.

**You may  
not know  
what you're  
missing.**

**Get an eye exam.**



**Our world offers so much to  
see. Don't miss a single thing.  
Schedule an eye exam today.**



# Cataracts

## Description

A cataract is a clouding of the eye's natural lens, which lies behind the iris and the pupil.

Cataracts are the most common cause of vision loss in people over age 40 and is the principal cause of blindness in the world. In fact, there are more cases of cataracts worldwide than there are of glaucoma, macular degeneration and diabetic retinopathy combined, according to Prevent Blindness America (PBA).

Today, cataracts affect more than 22 million Americans age 40 and older. And as the U.S. population ages, more than 30 million Americans are expected to have cataracts by the year 2020, PBA says.

## Symptoms and Signs

A cataract starts out small and at first has little effect on your vision. You may notice that your vision is blurred a little, like looking through a cloudy piece of glass or viewing an impressionist painting.

A cataract may make light from the sun or a lamp seem too bright or glaring. Or you may notice when you drive at night that the oncoming headlights cause more glare than before. Colors may not appear as bright as they once did.

The type of cataract you have will affect exactly which symptoms you experience and how soon they will occur. When a nuclear cataract first develops, it can bring about a temporary improvement in your near vision, called "second sight."

Unfortunately, the improved vision is short-lived and will disappear as the cataract worsens. On the other hand, a subcapsular cataract may not produce any symptoms until it's well-developed.

If you think you have a cataract, see an eye doctor for an exam to find out for sure.  
*(continued next page)*



***Hazy or blurred vision may mean you have a cataract.***

*(cont. from previous page)*

## What Causes Cataracts?

The lens inside the eye works much like a camera lens, focusing light onto the retina. It adjusts the eye's focus, letting us see things clearly both up close and far away. The lens is mostly made of water and protein. The protein is arranged in a precise way that keeps the lens clear and lets light pass through it.

But as we age, some of the protein may clump together and start to cloud a small area of the lens. This is a cataract, and over time, it may grow larger and cloud more of the lens, making it harder to see.

No one knows for sure why the eye's lens changes as we age, forming cataracts. Researchers are gradually identifying factors that may cause cataracts — and information that may help to prevent them.



## Cataract Treatment

When symptoms begin to appear, you may be able to improve your vision for a while using new glasses, strong bifocals, magnification, appropriate lighting or other visual aids.

Think about surgery when your cataracts have progressed enough to seriously impair your vision and affect your daily life.

Many people consider poor vision an inevitable fact of aging, but cataract surgery is a simple, relatively painless procedure to regain vision.

## Flu Vaccinations Soon Available for Eligible Veterans and Spouses

*Sites include Montevideo, Brainerd, Alexandria, and St. Cloud*

To keep you healthy during the flu season, the St. Cloud VA Health Care System has scheduled several flu shot clinics this fall. Flu shots for Veterans enrolled with the VA are free and an appointment is not necessary. The flu shots are available at the VA Medical Center in St. Cloud or any of the VA's three clinics across central Minnesota.

Spouses, significant others, caregivers, and Veterans who are not enrolled for health care with the VA can also receive a seasonal flu shot at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center location only. A fee of \$29 is required, and may be paid in cash or billed to the individual's health insurance. Spouses, significant others, caregivers and non-enrolled Veterans should bring their insurance or Medicare card to the clinic.



Non-enrolled Veterans may also obtain information on how to apply for VA health benefits at the flu clinics.

Clinic times and locations are listed on the opposite page.

Seasonal flu shots are also available during scheduled appointments beginning Sept. 10, or from Primary Care Teams on a walk-in basis at any of the St. Cloud VA locations. Walk-ins may have a short wait.

All Veterans are encouraged to enroll in the VA health care system. For information on enrolling for VA health care, contact the St. Cloud VA HCS Eligibility Office at (320) 255-6340.



# **Flu Shot Clinics**

**For Veterans receiving VA health care at St. Cloud VA & the  
Max J. Bielke, Brainerd, & Montevideo CBOCs**

***\*Flu vaccinations also offered to spouses & significant others at the St.  
Cloud VA location only, 9 to 11 a.m. Oct. 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup>. Payment (\$29) is re-  
quired or your health insurance will be billed.  
Please bring your insurance card(s).***

## **St. Cloud VA**

***Building 96 (West side of campus)***

***\*Oct. 3: 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.***

***\*Oct. 4: 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.***

## **Max J. Bielke CBOC**

***515 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue E. - Alexandria, MN***

***Oct. 11: 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.***

***Oct. 18: 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.***

## **Brainerd CBOC**

***722 NW 7<sup>th</sup> Street – Brainerd, MN***

***Oct. 3: 9 a.m. – Noon & 1 - 3 p.m.***

***Oct. 11: 9 a.m. – Noon & 1 - 3 p.m.***

***Oct. 19: 9 a.m. – Noon & 1 - 3 p.m.***

## **Montevideo CBOC**

***1025 North 13<sup>th</sup> Street - Montevideo, MN***

***Sept. 18: 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.***

***Oct. 3: 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.***

***Oct. 12: 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.***

***Any changes to the flu vaccination clinic schedule will be announced on a  
recorded message at: (320) 255-6444***

Seasonal flu shots are also available during scheduled appointments beginning Sept. 10, or from Primary Care Teams on a walk-in basis at any of the St. Cloud VA locations.



# You Are Invited To A Celebration of Caregivers

**WHO:** Veterans, Caregivers  
of Veterans, and other  
interested individuals

**WHEN:** Tues., Nov. 20, 2012  
11 a.m.-2 p.m.

**WHERE:** St. Cloud VA  
Auditorium (Bldg. 8)

**WHY:**

- To learn about VA services for Caregivers
- To network with other Caregivers of Veterans
- To discover tips for self-care and relaxation
- To have fun!

Coffee &  
refreshments  
will be served!



*"There are only four kinds of people in the world – those who have been caregivers, those who are currently caregivers, those who will be caregivers and those who will need caregivers". [Rosalynn Carter]*



## Healthy Mind ☼ Body ☼ Spirit

Therapeutic Drumming—Zumba Fitness Fun  
and the Relaxing Health Benefits of Tai Chi

A Women Veterans Health & Wellness Event

**Tuesday, September 25, 2012**

5:30 p.m. - Social Gathering and Flu Vaccinations

6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. - Program

**St. Cloud VA Medical Center**

4801 Veterans Drive, St. Cloud, MN

Building 96

**Also – Refreshments and Door Prizes**

**All women Veterans are welcome!**

**You do not have to be enrolled in VA care to attend this event**



**For further information  
and to register for the event,  
call: 320-255-6371**

# ***A Recipe for Health***

## **Creamy Tuna Noodle Casserole**

### ***Ingredients***

5 c. uncooked egg noodles  
1 (10 3/4-oz) can reduced-fat  
reduced-sodium condensed cream  
of mushroom soup  
1c. (8 oz.) fat-free sour cream  
2/3 c. grated Parmesan cheese  
1/3 c. 2% milk  
1/4 tsp. salt  
2 (5-oz.) cans light water packed tuna,  
drained and flaked  
1c. frozen peas, thawed  
1/4 c. finely chopped onion  
1/4 c. finely chopped green pepper  
*Topping:*  
1/2 c. soft bread crumbs  
1 T. butter, melted

### ***Directions***

Cook noodles according to package. Meanwhile, in a large bowl, combine the soup, sour cream, cheese, milk & salt. Stir in the tuna, peas, onion and pepper. Drain noodles; add to soup mixture. Transfer to an 11 X 7 - inch baking dish coated with cooking spray. Combine topping ingredients; sprinkle over top. Bake, uncovered, at 350° for 25-30 minutes or until bubbly. Serving size: 1 1/3 cups.  
*340 Calories, 8g fat, 699g sodium, 41g carbohydrates, 25 g protein.*



# Camp Lejeune

## Water Contamination

From the 1950s through the 1980s, people living or working at the U.S. Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, were potentially exposed to drinking water contaminated with industrial solvents, benzene, and other chemicals.



### New health benefits

Under a law signed Aug. 6, 2012, Veterans and family members who served on active duty or resided at Camp Lejeune for 30 days or more between Jan. 1, 1957 and Dec. 31, 1987 may be eligible for medical care through VA for 15 health conditions, including:

- |                          |                             |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ✦ Esophageal cancer      | ✦ Lung cancer               |
| ✦ Breast cancer          | ✦ Bladder cancer            |
| ✦ Kidney cancer          | ✦ Leukemia                  |
| ✦ Multiple myeloma       | ✦ Myelodysplastic syndromes |
| ✦ Renal toxicity         | ✦ Hepatic steatosis         |
| ✦ Female infertility     | ✦ Miscarriage               |
| ✦ Scleroderma            | ✦ Neurobehavioral effects   |
| ✦ Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma |                             |

Veterans already enrolled in VA health care, contact your local VA health care facility to receive care under the new law. Those not already enrolled may call a national phone number, 877-222-8387, or the St. Cloud VA Eligibility office at 320-255-6340 for enrollment assistance.

Family members will receive care after Congress appropriates funds and VA publishes regulations.

### Compensation benefits

The new law applies to health care, not disability compensation. At this time, there is insufficient scientific and clinical evidence to establish a presumptive association between service at Camp Lejeune during the period of water contamination and the development of certain diseases.

Veterans may file a claim for disability compensation for health problems they believe are related to exposure to contaminated water at Camp Lejeune. VA decides these claims on a case-by-case basis. See your County VSO to file a claim.

# Children are Quick

**TEACHER:** Why are you late?

**STUDENT:** Class started before I got here.

**TEACHER:** John, why are you doing your math multiplication on the floor?

**JOHN:** You told me to do it without using tables.

**TEACHER:** Glenn, how do you spell 'crocodile?'

**GLENN:** K-R-O-K-O-D-I-A-L'

**TEACHER:** No, that's wrong

**GLENN:** Maybe it is wrong, but you asked me how I spell it.

**TEACHER:** Donald, what is the chemical formula for water?

**DONALD:** H I J K L M N O.

**TEACHER:** What are you talking about?

**DONALD:** Yesterday you said it's H to O.

**TEACHER:** Winnie, name one important thing we have today that we didn't have ten years ago.

**WINNIE:** Me!

**TEACHER:** Glen, why do you always get so dirty?

**GLEN:** Well, I'm a lot closer to the ground than you are.

**TEACHER:** George Washington not only chopped down his father's cherry tree, but also admitted it. Now, Louie, do you know why his father didn't punish him?

**LOUIS:** Because George still had the axe in his hand.....



## Veterans' Burial Benefits

Many veterans are under the impression that their status as a Veteran means that the government will pay for their burial. This is not true and it can cause great financial hardship for families who don't understand it at a time when they are least prepared to deal with it.

It is very important that Veterans have their discharge papers located in a secure place known to their next of kin. Eligibility for potential burial benefits depends on these documents, and they cannot always be obtained quickly from government sources.

To be eligible for burial benefits, a Veteran must have been discharged under conditions other than dishonorable. Certain other factors including time period and length of service may apply, so the family should contact the VA at 1-800-827-1000 for final determination of eligibility.

Burial benefits available include a gravesite in any of VA's 131 national cemeteries, as well as in state- owned- and- operated Veterans' cemeteries.

For Veterans interred at a national or state Veterans' cemetery, the opening and closing of the grave and perpetual care are provided at no cost. If buried at a private cemetery, the family must pay these costs, as well as the cost of the plot and any related expenses. (cont. next page)

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The VA will provide a burial flag, a government marker, and a Presidential Memorial Certificate, regardless of where the Veteran is buried.

If burial is to take place in a national or state Veterans' cemetery, the cemetery will make the arrangements for the interment only. Neither the cemetery nor the VA makes funeral arrangements or performs cremations.

It is the responsibility of the Veteran's family to make arrangements for funeral services with a funeral home, including memorial services, viewings, preparing and transporting the remains, the casket, etc. Any items or services obtained from a funeral home will be at the families' expense, including the plot and grave provisions if the Veteran is not buried in a national or state cemetery. The VA does not pay for any expenses related to a Veteran's burial or funeral.

Certain survivors may apply for a monetary burial allowance paid after-the-fact by the VA, but generally only if the Veteran was in receipt of VA disability compensation or pension at the time of death, or if the Veteran died while hospitalized by VA or while receiving care under VA contract at a non-VA facility.

The amount payable depends on whether the Veteran's death was related to a military service-connected disability, with the payments ranging from \$300 to \$2,000.

There are other factors that can affect potential eligibility for this benefit, so Veterans or their families should contact your County Veteran Service Officer for more information prior to actually needing the information.



# ST. CLOUD VETERANS WIN AT NATIONAL CREATIVE ARTS FESTIVAL

Twenty-two Veterans from the St. Cloud VA in the Central Minnesota area garnered awards, including several national gold medal awards, during this year's National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

"We are so proud of the results of the competition," said Beverly Gross, Music Therapist at the St. Cloud VA. "We are equally proud of all of our Veterans who use the arts to further their therapy."

In the musical and performing arts portion of the competition, the duet of John Jordan and Rick Stang placed first in the Vocal Group Patriotic category with the song "Colors."

The group Country Knockabouts placed first in the Senior Instrumental Group category with the song "Blue Skirt Waltz." Members of the group and their instruments include Ted Champlin – Tubano; Ray Ebertowski – Paddle Drum; Karl Foster – Banjo; Ray Hall – Harmonica; Edwin Lahr – Tambourine; Richard Loomis – Cowbell; Stanley Manthey – Maracas; Albert Olson – Washboard; Lester Schroeder – Vocals; Timothy Wesenberg – Frame Drum; and George Wright – Claves.

The Soldiers of Note Band placed third in the Vocal Group Rock category with the song "Memphis." Members include Bill Underwood – Guitar and Vocals; Wayne Strause – Guitar and Vocals; Andrew Porter – Guitar; and Rick Butler – Drums.

Stanley Manthey and Leah Egan placed second in the Structured Ballroom Dance category, dancing to the song "Pennsylvania 6-5000."

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In the Visual Arts competition, Kim Ryan Hubbard placed first in the Stained or Painted Ceramics category with the work titled "Native Inspiration."



Jack Wimmer earned a second place award in the Mosaic/Wood Intarsia category with his work "Feeding Time."



Raymond Sobania placed second in the Wood Model Building Kit category with the work titled "Norden T.78."

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Nationwide, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities use the creative arts as one form of rehabilitative treatment to help Veterans recover from and cope with physical and emotional disabilities.

Across the country each year, Veterans treated at VA facilities compete in a local creative arts competition. Locally, the St. Cloud VA held its competition in early February. This competition includes more than 53 art categories that range from oil painting to leatherwork and even paint-by-number kits. In addition, there are 120 categories pertaining to all aspects of music, dance, drama and creative writing.

Local artists judge the artwork to determine first, second and third place in each category. The first place winners at the local competition advance on to the national level where they compete with entries submitted by Veterans from other VA facilities around the country.

A national selection committee chooses first, second and third place winners among all of the entries.

In 2012, 3,725 Veterans from 130 VA facilities entered the competition nationwide, with 145 of the medal-winning Veterans earning an invitation to participate in the 2012 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, hosted by the VA Boston Healthcare System and held in Quincy and Boston, Massachusetts.

The National Veterans Creative Arts Festival is presented each year by the Department of Veterans Affairs, American Legion Auxiliary and Help Hospitalized Veterans.



## *Just think - no more phone tag!*

With Secure Messaging thru My Health<sup>e</sup>Vet, you can contact your VA Healthcare team without waiting on hold or playing phone tag. Secure Messaging is as easy to use as email, but completely safe and secure. It's great for non-urgent communication and general healthcare-related questions.

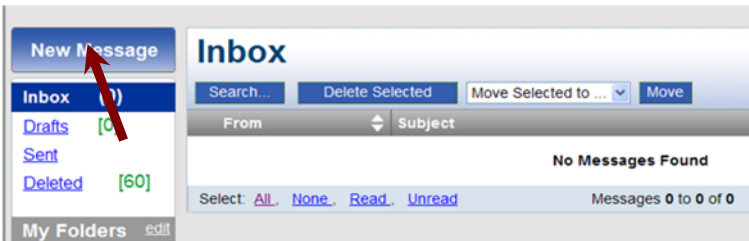
**No Waiting on Hold!**  
**No Waiting for a Call Back!**  
***Don't Delay, Opt-in Today!***

### How to use Secure Messaging:

- 1) Log into your My Health<sup>e</sup>Vet account at: [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov)  
(Forgot your User ID or Password? Simply click on the 'Forgot User ID' or 'Forgot Password' link directly below the sign in box. Note, you only need to answer one of the two security questions that will appear.)
- 2) Select "Secure Messaging" on the top navigation bar, then click on the orange "Open Secure Messaging" tab in the middle of the screen.
- 3) If it's the first time you're accessing your Secure Messaging inbox, you will need to read the terms and conditions and select 'Opt In'.



- 4) Click 'New Message' and your provider's name will automatically be in the 'To' line of the message.



We hope you take advantage of Secure Messaging. If you have any questions about Secure Messaging or My Health<sup>e</sup>Vet, please contact me via phone or email. I'll be happy to explain this time-saving tool.

You can also stop by my office during your next visit to the St. Cloud VA and I'll help you get on-track with Secure Messaging and many of the other great tools and features of My Health<sup>e</sup>Vet.



Brian Vetter  
My Health<sup>e</sup>Vet Coordinator  
St. Cloud VA Healthcare System  
Phone: 320-252-1670, dial 9 then ext: 7335



## **VA National Salute to Veteran Patients**

As part of the National Salute to Veteran Patients, the St. Cloud VA HCS has been selected to host one of 17 nationally funded “Valentines for Veterans” concerts. The concert, featuring Country Music Singer-Songwriter **Lucas Hoge**, is scheduled for **February 10, 2013, at 2 p.m., at the Paramount Theatre** in St. Cloud.

The concert is free to area Veterans and their family members.



The **VA National Salute to Veteran** patients is always celebrated the week of Valentine’s Day, and its purposes are to:

- Pay tribute and express appreciation to America’s Veterans.
- Promote awareness in the community of the local VA medical facility.
- Encourage citizens to visit hospitalized veterans and to become involved as VA volunteers.
- Increase awareness of issues affecting OEF/OIF/OND Veterans and their families.
- Pay tribute and express respect and appreciation to America’s Gold Star families.

A concerted effort is made to have as many hospitalized Veterans attend the concert as possible. Special effort is made to invite America’s Gold Star families to V4V concerts to show appreciation, love and support..

**Volunteers and monetary support are needed to provide ground transportation, housing, food, and to distribute tickets and meet any other needs of the group.**

**Contact Voluntary Services at 320-255-6365  
to see how you or your group can help!**





*Take care of your buddy!*

**Help a fellow Veteran enroll for  
VA health care.**

**Contact your County Veteran  
Service Officer, call the St.  
Cloud VA at 320-255-6340, or  
apply online at**

**[www.1010ez.med.va.gov](http://www.1010ez.med.va.gov)**